

Indiana agencies desperate to find foster parents with children entering system at all-time high



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BLOOMINGTON, Ind. — Agencies across Indiana are scrambling to find more foster parents as the number of children entering foster care in the state is at an all-time high.

The Villages of Indiana, the state’s largest not-for-profit child and family services agency, will host several sessions over the next few months to meet individuals and couples interested in learning more about foster parenting, [The Herald-Times](#) reported.

“They are really informal times for families who are considering foster care, or for people who are interested in learning what that even means

or would entail,” said Deborah Brewer, The Villages’ regional and early childhood program director. “We cover a lot of really basic questions to more specific questions, like the amount of training involved, space and time requirements.”

A January report from the Indiana Department of Child Services shows there are nearly 1,000 children in need of service in Monroe, Brown, Greene, Owen and Lawrence counties. More than 460 of those children live in Monroe County.

The Villages has a contract with the Indiana Department of Child Services to facilitate the foster process. It currently has about 235 licensed homes across the state. Brewer said nearly 20 of those homes are in the Bloomington area.

There are nearly 280 children currently placed in homes across Indiana. Twenty of them are placed in homes in and around Monroe County.

Brewer said it’s not enough.

“This is what breaks my heart,” Brewer said. “This month alone I’ve had, for the southern Indiana region, 72 calls from DCS. That’s for about 150 to 200 kids. I’ve been able to place three this month. Right now, I have to say ‘No’ a lot.”

Brewer said it’s crucial to have a variety of foster parents available.

“Anyone can be a foster parent. I have single parents, couples, including same-sex couples, retired people, people with kids, empty nesters,” she said. “Kids come from all types of backgrounds. You want foster parents in every county, so you can place a child close to their area. You also want to be able to make the best match possible so we can make it last.”